During the period 01.05.1997 to 31.10.1997, there were 213 consequential train accidents comprising 13 collisions, 166 derailments, 31 accidents at level crossings and 3 cases of fire in trains.

(b) The damage to Railway property was estimated at Rs. 29.05 crores. The accidents were due to human failure, equipment failure and sabotage etc.

(c) and (d) Steps taken to bring down the incidence of train accidents on Indian Railways are as under:—

(i) The work of track circuitng has been accelerated on the trunk routes and other important main lines.

(ii) Modification of the Signalling circuitry is being carried out to minimise chances of human error in causing accidents.

(iii) Auxiliary Warning system for giving advance warning about Signal at Danger' to the driver of the running train has been commissioned on Mumbai suburban sections.

(iv) There has been progressive increase in use of tie tamping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance.

(v) For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and potable accelerometers are being progressively used.

(vi) Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernised and upgraded at many depots.

(vii) To prevent cases of cold breakage of axles, ROH depots have been equipped with ultransonie testing equipment for detection of flaws in the axles.

(viii) Whistle boards/speed breakers and road signs have been provided at unmanned level crossings and visibility for drivers has been improved.

(ix) Audio-visual publicity campaigns to educate road users on how to make a safe crossing are conducted.

(x) Steps have been taken to prevent inflammable and explosive materials from being carried in passenger trains.

(xi) Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train operation have been modernised including use of simulators for training of drivers.

(xii) Refresher courses are regularly organised at specified intervals.

(xiii) Performance of the staff connected with train operation is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.

(xiv) Periodical safety drives are conducted to inculcate safety conciousness among the staff.

No compensation has been paid so far. Compensation will be paid after the claims are decided by the Railway Claims Tribunal.

Criteria for issuance of complimentary Railway Passes

442. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new complimentary Riiilwiiy Passes issued during the last one year;

(b) the categories of people to whom they have been issued; and

(c) whether any specific guidelines have been laid down as to the consideration on which the complimentary passes should be issued?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN):

(a) (i) No. of card passes issued during 1996-97: (including 42,086

passes issued to Freedom Fighters)	
(ii) No. of Cheque Passes issued during 1996-97:	6168

(b)) S. No. — Categories of people to whom issued

A. Card Passes

1. Freedom Fighters (cost borne by Ministry of Home Affairs)
2. Former Minister of Railways/Former Minister of State of Railways/Dy. Minister for Railways.
3. Former Members of Parliament.
4. Arjuna Awardces, Olympic Medalists, Asian and Commonwealth Gold Medalists
5. Recipients of Chakra series of Gallantry Awards (Defence)
6. Recipients of Presidents' Police Medal for Gallantry and police Medal for Gallantry (Police)
7. Presidents/Secretaries of National Sports Federation of India, Indian Olympic Association and State Olympic asscociations affiliated to IOA.
8. Eminent persons & organisations engaged in social, cultural, educational, sports and welfare activities at MR's discretion.

B. Cheque Passes for specific journeys at MR/MOS(R)/Board Members discretion as per guidelines.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Present status of Konkan Railway Project

443. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present stage of the Konkan Railway Project;

(b) when the project is likely to be completed and become operational;

(c) the reasons for delay in the completion; and

(d) the total cost thereof and the expenditure incurred on the project so far?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) The overall physical progress is 99.37% as on 31.10.97.

(b) By 31.12.1997 and will immediately thereafter become operational.

(c) The main reasons for delay in the completion have been shortage of funds, stoppage of work in Mayem and Bali seciton for 8 months, additional works in Goa sector as per accepted recommendations of Oza Committee Report and adverse geological conditions encountered within 4 tunnels in Goa sector.

(d)Total estimated cost	—	Rs. 2400.00 crores
Expenditure incurred upto 30-9-97 (excluding financing charges)	—	Rs. 2382.00 crores

New broad gauge line connecting Kolhapur Ratnagiri on Konkan Railway

444. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a Survey Report in respect of new BG (Broad Gauge) line connecting Kolhapur to Ratnagiri on Konkan Railway Alignment *via* Talawade;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken by Government on the Report;

(d) if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor; and

(e) by when the action will commence?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

(e) After the survey report has been received and considered.